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THE PICARESQUE IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT: MORALITY IN GIL BLAS AND MOLL FLANDERS

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE PICARESQUE IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT: MORALITY IN GIL BLAS AND MOLL FLANDERS submitted by Susan Hargreaves in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the theme of morality in Gil Blas and Moll Flanders from the perspectives of the picaresque, which developed in the sixteenth century, and the eighteenth century Enlightenment. The first chapter focuses on the picaresque concept of morality which is markedly similar to that of the Reformation and which separates morality from worldly concerns. In the second chapter the Enlightenment viewpoint is presented and proves to be in direct contrast with that of the picaresque because, for the eighteenth century, morality could be reconciled with the natural world. The third chapter analyses the moral progress in the two novels from the point of view of the picaresque and the Enlightenment. In this discussion of the novels the nature of the relationship between morality and identity becomes important. This relationship and how it differs in the picaresque and the Enlightenment is the subject of the Conclusion.

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CHAPTER I

THE MORAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PICARESQUE

The picaresque novel as a genre originated in sixteenth-century Spain. However, it is more difficult to pinpoint the beginning of the picaresque novel in general:

> From earliest times, of course, the rogue has been a favorite character in story and picture. As far back as the Satyricon, Petronius at the court of Nero recognized the possibilities of the type. In the Middle Ages the FABLES continued the manner though it transferred roguery from man to animals. Reynard is a typical picaroon. He lives by his wits; gets into trouble and out of it, but always interests the reader. It was not until the sixteenth century that this rogue literature crystallized and became a definite type.[1]

This specific type of picaresque literature will be first discussed from the historical perspective of sixteenth-century Spain. The derivation of the word "picaresque" and the nature of the picaro and his society form an important background to the picaresque novel. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth century are significant because they had a profound effect on man's way of perceiving his relationships with the world around him, and with God. Parker's analyses of Lazarillo de Tormes and Guzmán de Alfarache, two early picaresque novels, reveal that this moral perspective can be found in the literature of the period. After discussing the historical development of the picaresque, certain characteristics of the genre will be examined and related to the moral nature of the early picaresque novels.

The French word "picaresque" is derived from the Spanish "picaresco" or "pícaro" meaning "rogue." Thus, the meaning of the picaresque genre is derived from the character of its hero. "Rogue" can have a variety of meanings:

> 1. An unprincipled person; a scoundrel or rascal. 2. A person who is playfully mischievous; scamp. 3. Archaic. A solitary animal, especially an elephant that has separated itself from its herd. 5. An organism, especially a plant, that shows an undesirable variation from a standard.[2]

All these various definitions, however, point to a character that is essentially an outsider. Parker prefers the term "delinquent" to "rogue" as the English equivalent of "pícaro": "an offender against the moral and civil laws; not a vicious criminal such as a gangster or a murderer, but someone who is dishonourable and anti-social in a much less violent way."[3]

The relationship of the pícaro to his society is the focal point of the picaresque genre. Historically, the picaro may be traced to the soldiers who remained social outsiders after desertion. Sieber points out that during the sixteenth century "The Hapsburg kings were committed to empire-building and waged war on a scale that the world had never seen before. Vast armies of Spanish pike-men (picas secas and/or piqueros secos, from the verb picar) had to be provisioned, garrisoned, transported and occasionally paid to defend Spain's far-flung territories."[4] The Spanish army, in fact, forced into recruitment criminals and slaves in order to fill the ranks of its armies. The morale of the army soon dropped and desertion became a common occurrence. Sieber suggests that the deserting soldier "attempted to return home, begging and stealing on the way. It is

possible that some of the deserters carried their previous military title of piquero with them into 'civilian' life."[5]

These social outcasts in the sixteenth century were faced, however, with a changing society. The medieval world of established social positions was being gradually replaced by social mobility and money was beginning to replace land as a measure of wealth. Because of the mobility made possible by the increasing importance of money, the individual had to rely on his own efforts to survive and achieve success in society. Poverty was no longer an inescapable fact of one's social position; by relying on his abilities, the youth could rise above his "low" birth and attain a higher position. However, in order to do this, he would sometimes be required to resort to underhanded techniques:

> Since such an unfortunate youth was inevitably a parasite, his stock in trade was his quick wits, which time and need sharpened to a razor edge. The stupid boy simply did not survive. The pícaro soon realized that honesty and faithfulness were luxuries which he could not afford, and his life proved the effectiveness with which he rid himself of such pernicious limitations.[6]

This moral predicament which opposes worldly success, or even worldly survival, and morality or obedience to divine will may be related to the great movement of religious reform which swept the sixteenth century. The major theorists of the Reformation criticized the established Catholic Church for its decadence: its involvement in worldly concerns. True morality could not be realized through worldly means, because the world was inherently corrupt and fallen. Only by shunning the physical world and striving for direct communion with the spiritual God could man achieve morality and, ultimately, salvation.

Thus, faith, the inner working of divine grace, was the only means by which man could be led to righteousness. The Counter-Reformation "was not only spurred on but was heavily influenced in its nature by the pressure of the Reformation crisis. . . ."[7] Following the Reformation, then, the Counter-Reformation placed more emphasis on "the individual's relation to God. . . ."[8] This new emphasis included the Reformation beliefs in worldly corruption; the sinful nature of the physical world was directly opposed by the moral righteousness of spiritual faith and divine grace. With the growth of the printing press, it became possible for the Church to educate the populace in the true means of morality; in fact, "Education was rightly seen as a vital tool for the task the Church had set itself. . . ."[9] The Church officially demanded that literature have a moral content and "The demand for edification encouraged the realistic portrayal of man in credible circumstances. . . ."[10]

For Parker the early picaresque novels reflect the concern that literature "promulgate the truths of the Christian faith and a sense of moral responsibility based upon the actual problems of real life. . ." (p. 21). Parker considers Lazarillo de Tormes as only a forerunner of the picaresque genre but, "None-the-less, it fits exactly into the picture here sketched of the genesis of the picaresque novel, for it, too, was born of the movement of religious reform" (p. 24). The story of Lazarillo de Tormes concerns a young man, born into a position of poverty, who is turned out into the world to fend for himself. He learns to look after his own interests by employing frequently devious means and eventually "attains to the security and

respectability that his birth made it necessary for him to achieve by his own merits" (p. 29). For Parker, this novel is concerned primarily with the corruption of those who meddle in worldly affairs:

> The poor, who can rise only by means of a dependence on their fellow-men, will do so by learning that respectability and prosperity are masks for complacent self-dishonour. (p. 29)

The story of Guzmán de Alfarache, like that of Lazarillo de Tormes, involves worldly corruption. The hero, Guzmán, survives and prospers by cheating and swindling; at one point he lives off his wife's prostitution. When his swindles are finally discovered, Guzmán, as punishment, is sent off to be a galley-slave. In his suffering, Guzmán is morally transformed. Because of its moral considerations, Guzmán de Alfarache is, for Parker, a truer picaresque novel than Lazarillo de Tormes:

> . . . it attempts to portray, for the first time in novelistic form, the individual experience of delinquency in its full range. It does this within the context of religious doctrine and experience, that of temptation, sin, and repentance. (p. 31)

Both Guzmán de Alfarache and Lazarillo de Tormes, then, reflect the impossibility of reconciling moral goodness with worldly survival and prosperity, as Bjornson points out:

> In Lazarillo and Guzmán, fictive narrators develop rhetorical arguments to justify their own behavior, and both imply that a corrupt society dehumanizes the lower-class, wandering character by requiring him to adopt its selfish, materialistic values.[11]

J.A. Jones, in his study of Guzmán de Alfarache, suggests that the conflict between spiritual morality and the corruption of worldly society is an essential part of the novel:

> The interplay between Guzmán and this society furnishes the essential picaresque theme and offers a means of analysing the problems of delinquency, against the more general and wider problem of man's struggle with sin and evil.[12]

From the historical development of these early picaresque novels certain characteristics of the genre may be drawn. The conflict between morality and worldly survival is central to the picaresque which, thus, focuses on the relationship of the picaro to his society. The picaro is the central character in a picaresque novel. In fact, as Chandler points out, the unity of the picaresque "was an inferior unity, not that of time or place or action, but merely of the identity of the hero."[13] The story, as a consequence, "unrolled itself usually from the hero's own narration. . . ."[14]

However, the picaro is usually an outsider of low position, involved in a seemingly never-ending series of adventures in his fight for survival:

> The Spanish pícaro was usually a member of the lower classes in origin, although occasionally one finds that he has fallen from a presumably higher estate. Whether it is his original poverty or his laziness which has caused his present condition, his adventures require that he be both destitute and absolutely without resources other than his wits.[15]

Monteser emphasizes that the picaro is "involved in his asocial and usually illegal activities as a last resort in a fight for simple physical survival in a hostile environment."[16] Bjornson, too, notes the central importance in the picaresque of "the ambitious commoner's struggle for survival in a hostile, highly competitive world. . . ."[17] Miller extends the concept of survival to include the psychological as well as the physical:

> The beginnings of picaresque novels point, then, to a disordered world which the hero affirms by joining. By becoming a trickster, the hero makes the only choice other than suicide that the world offers him. If the world is tricky, peopled by tricksters, the pícaro must either give up his personality to join the trickery or else perish. The pícaro always joins. But, and this must be underscored, the pattern of education into roguery by the world reflects on the world more than on the pícaro. It is the world that is picaresque; the pícaro only typifies that world in his dramatic change from innocent to trickster.[18]

It is the world, then, that is inherently corrupt and the picaro is corrupted by simply trying to survive in it. Worldly prosperity and survival itself seem irreconcilable with morality in the picaresque novel.

This moral dilemma of the picaresque, as we have seen, may be explained from an historical perspective. Lower class outcasts in the changing world of the sixteenth century were led, of necessity, to commit asocial or illegal acts not only to succeed, but to survive. Reformers exposed the decadence of a Church corrupted by worldly concerns and, as part of an effort to re-establish morality, the Church placed new demands on literature; literature must now be morally educational, warning its readers of the worldly vices. The picaresque novel, perhaps in response to these historical developments, deals with a fundamental moral problem: man cannot be moral in a world where he must use immoral means simply to survive.

NOTES

[1] William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, Rev. C. Hugh Holman (New York: The Odyssey Press Inc., 1960), p. 352.

[2] William Morris, ed., The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (New York: The American Heritage Publishing Co. Inc., 1969), p. 1124.

[3] Alexander A. Parker, Literature and the Delinquent: The Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe, 1599-1753 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), p. 4. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[4] Harry Sieber, The Picaresque (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1977), p. 6.

[5] Sieber, p. 6.

[6] Frederick Monteser, The Picaresque Element in Western Literature (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1975), p. 3.

[7] H.O. Evennett, "The Counter Reformation," in The Reformation Crisis, ed. Joel Hurstfield (London: Edwin Arnold Ltd., 1965), p. 60.

[8] Evennett, p. 61.

[9] R.O. Jones, The Golden Age of Prose and Poetry: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Vol. III of A Literary History of Spain (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1971), p. 76.

[10] R.O. Jones, p. 77.

[11] Richard Bjornson, The Picaresque Hero in European Fiction (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), pp. 64-65.

[12] J.A. Jones, "The Duality and Complexity of Guzmán de Alfarache: Some Thoughts on the Structure and Interpretation of Alemán's Novel," in Knaves and Swindlers: Essays on the Picaresque Novel in Europe, ed. Christine J. Whitbourn (London: Oxford University Press for the University of Hull, 1974), p. 46.

[13] Frank Wadleigh Chandler, Romances of Roguery: An Episode in the History of the Novel: The Picaresque Novel in Spain (New York: Burt Franklin, 1961), p. 16.

[14] Chandler, p. 16.

[15] Monteser, p. 13.

[16] Monteser, p. 115.

[17] Bjornson, p. 14.

[18] Stuart Miller, The Picaresque Novel (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1967), p. 56.

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

"Enlightenment" is a significant term and a good point of departure for discussing the dominant theories of the eighteenth century. Philosophers and scientists of this period probed and investigated in order to find out how man and the world around him functioned. These enlightened individuals disregarded many of the old beliefs, which they believed to be unfounded superstitions, in favour of statements of fact grounded in observation and rational thought. The belief in a fallen and corrupt physical world which had produced the conflict between survival and morality in the picaresque novel was radically changed in the Enlightenment; from their observations, eighteenth-century philosophers and scientists concluded that both man and the natural world were subject to divine ordering. The laws of God to be found in Nature had their counterpart in man's reason. It was, in fact, the light of reason that opened up the natural laws to man and enabled him to live in accordance with them. Survival in the natural world no longer ensures man's corruption; for the men of the Enlightenment Nature is inherently moral and man's reason leads him to this morality. Thus, eighteenth-century theory may be discussed under two large headings: natural law and human reason.

Nature, in the Enlightenment, became an all-important consideration. Science, as Willey points out, had revealed everywhere in Nature

"design, order, and law, where hitherto there had been chaos."[1] No longer regarded as fallen, "Nature was rescued from Satan and restored to God. For the physical world, in spite of its divine origin, was traditionally held to have shared in the fatal consequences of the fall of man, and to have become the chosen abode of the apostate spirits" (p. 4). Willey explains that the new vigour with which men studied the natural world was, at this early point, guided by religious and moral concerns:

> Most of the great scientists . . . conceived that they had rendered the highest services to religion as well as to science, and Descartes, Boyle, and Newton, as is well known, were notable theists. As Bacon had said (and Sir Thomas More before him), science was the study of the works of God, and this should be almost, if not quite, as pious a pursuit as the study of his word. (p. 4)

Nature, divinely ordered by the laws of God, had an observable, physical existence and was, therefore, considered easier to understand than the remote, spiritual God. The notion of the incomprehensibility of God had been already heightened as an indirect result of the Reformation crisis. At the time of the crisis Reformers felt that they were simply trying to "reform" the Church; by ridding the Church of its worldly, decadent concerns, they hoped to restore it to spiritual purity. However, two hundred years after the sixteenth-century Reformation, the religious conflicts led to the growth of "natural religion," "by calling into doubt all the points of faith, and reducing them to the level of controversy" (p. 6). Hurstfield also points out this result of the Reformation debates:

> . . . the theologians, having discredited each other in their bitter quarrels, found to their dismay that they had brought discredit upon the very fundamentals of their religion and thereby helped to open the door to scepticism, free thinking and rationalism.[2]

Thus, with the growing scepticism about man's understanding of God, came a new interest in God's observable creation: Nature. Discoveries of scientists such as Newton, who proved the existence of the laws of attraction and gravitation, hinted at a regularity of ordered movement in the universe. Edmund Halley's ode dedicated to Newton hails the scientist as the man who had uncovered these laws of Nature; the ode begins as follows:

> Lo, for your gaze, the pattern of the skies!
> What balance of the mass, what reckonings
> Divine! Here ponder too the laws which God,
> Framing the universe, set not aside
> But made the fixed foundations of his work.
>
> The inmost places of the heavens, now gained,
> Break into view, nor longer hidden is
> The force that turns the farthest orb.[3]

and ends,

> Come celebrate with me in song the name
> of Newton, to the Muses dear; for he
> Unlocked the hidden treasuries of Truth:
> So richly through his mind had Phoebus cast
> The radiance of his own divinity.
> Nearer the gods no mortal may approach.[4]

In this ode we can see evidence of the new "natural religion"; Newton has revealed in Nature the manifestation of divine will. Cotes' preface to Newton's work makes this concept more explicit:

> Without all doubt this world, so diversified with that variety of forms and motions we find in it, could arise from nothing but the perfectly free will of God directing and presiding over all.
>
> From this fountain it is that those laws, which we call the laws of Nature, have flowed, in which there appear many traces indeed of the most wise contrivance, but not the least shadow of necessity.[5]

Cotes says that, because of Newton's discoveries, "we may now more nearly behold the beauties of Nature, and entertain ourselves with the

delightful contemplation; and, which is the best and most valuable fruit of philosophy, be thence incited the more profoundly to reverence and adore the great Maker and Lord of all."[6] Cotes' suggestion that through study of Nature we may perceive the presence of God is supported by Newton himself. According to Newton, the only understanding of God that we can possibly have must come from the appearance of things in the physical world around us; we can thus know God "only by his most wise and excellent contrivances of things."[7]

Newton's vision of a lawful Nature, directed by God, is also to be found in Descartes' work:

> . . . je me résolus de laisser tout ce monde ici à leurs disputes, et de parler seulement de ce qui arriverait dans un nouveau, si Dieu créait maintenant quelque part, dans les espaces imaginaires, assez de matière pour le composer, et qu'il agitât diversement et sans ordre les diverses parties de cette matière, en sorte qu'il en composât un Chaos aussi confus que les poètes en puissent feindre, et que, par après, il ne fît autre chose que prêter son concours ordinaire à la nature, et la laisser agir suivant les lois qu'il a établies.[8]

God, for Descartes, embodies absolute perfection and, although man himself is imperfect, he can perceive the natural laws of God everywhere in Creation. Even if God had created other worlds, says Descartes, "il n'y en saurait avoir aucun où elles [the perfect laws of God] manquassent d'être observées."[9]

Locke, like Descartes and Newton, believes that God has established the universe to run on "valid and fixed laws of operation. . . ."[10] Hobbes, more specifically than Locke, identifies nineteen laws of Nature. These may all be reduced, says Hobbes, to the maxim: "Do not that to another which you would not have done to

yourself. . . ."[11] At the basis of natural law, for Hobbes, is man's natural right to "use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature. . . ."[12] It is important to note that the culmination of natural law is the reconciliation of morality and survival, which are typically opposed in the picaresque. Self-preservation is man's natural right and it may, in fact, be seen as necessary to true morality. If an individual is consciously aware of his own needs for survival, then he can, through use of his reason, extend this awareness to other human beings like himself. Reason, then, is a very important component of natural morality for philosophers because it is through the proper use of reason that man is able to live in harmony with the world around him.

It is, in fact, rather artificial to separate the external laws of Nature from the inner regulation of man's reason. Reason is the divine law working within man which leads him to an understanding of the divine law in Nature. It is significant that, although reason is a divine gift, it is also "naturally" present in man. Thus, man can achieve morality, that is understanding of natural law, through his own rational ability. Willey emphasizes this union of natural law and reason, stating, "The laws of Nature are the laws of reason; they are always and everywhere the same, and like the axioms of mathematics they have only to be acknowledged as just and right by all men" (p. 2). Willey goes on to point out that, for eighteenth century thinkers, "Natural religion reaches God not only through the starry heavens above, but also through the moral law within: through Reason as well as Nature" (p. 7). Willey summarizes the advice of the eighteenth

century regarding morality in this way:

> You know perfectly well what to do: your own nature informs you. Follow Reason, the God within; look after your conduct and your creed will take care of itself. (p. 8)

Reason, as the force which draws man to the divine laws of Nature, is important not only to philosophers such as Locke, Hobbes, and Descartes, but also to scientists like Newton as well:

> Matters that vexed the minds of ancient seers,
> And for our learned doctors often led
> To loud and vain contention, now are seen
> In reason's light, the clouds of ignorance
> Dispelled at last by science.[13]

Newton's scientific method, which proceeds from observation of particular physical data to formulation of a general conclusion, is in itself inductive, logical reasoning. Cotes asserts that "He must be blind who from the most wise and excellent contrivances of things cannot see the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of their Almightly Creator, and he must be mad and senseless who refuses to acknowledge them."[14] An individual who is "mad and senseless" presumably does not have complete use of his reason. If he did, he would be able to perceive the moral goodness in Nature simply by observing the world he lives in. Newton states explicitly that in the proper method "particular propositions are inferred from the phenomena, and afterwards rendered general by induction."[15] It is thus by observing the natural world that Newton perceives "the ideas and will of a Being necessarily existing."[10]

Newton's method, proceeding from sensory observation to general conclusion, is also advocated by Locke and Hobbes. Locke, although he acknowledges the importance of Reason, emphasizes the role of sense experience:

> Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from experience. In that all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring.[17]

Because words represent ideas, and because all ideas have their bases in sensory reality, then language, for Locke, must be clear and precise. In fact, clarity and precision in language can lead to moral correctness:

> I am bold to think that morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics; since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered; in which consists perfect knowledge.[18]

Locke repeatedly emphasizes this belief that "morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics":

> Confident I am that, if men would in the same method, and with the same indifferency, search after moral as they do mathematical truths, they would find them to have a stronger connexion one with another, and a more necessary consequence from our clear and distinct ideas, and to come nearer perfect demonstration than is commonly imagined.[19]

Morality is so clearly capable of "perfect demonstration" for Locke, as well as Newton, because we can perceive morality in the natural laws which can be represented, as Newton showed, in mathematical formulae and diagrams. Natural law is thus perceptible by the senses; this is important because, in Locke's view, all the ideas that man's reason can think of must first come through the senses. Reason, then, "does not so much establish and pronounce this law as search for it and

discover it as a law enacted by a superior power. . . ."[20] Locke considers that the laws of Nature are ultimately defined by the powers of "reason and sense-perception."[21]

Sensory experience as a necessary starting point for rational thought is emphasized by Hobbes as well as by Locke:

> . . . there is no conception in a man's mind which has not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original.[22]

Although reason ultimately relies on sense-experience, for Hobbes as for Locke, it is an extremely important human quality because it is reason which leads man to true knowledge:

> The use and end of reason is not the finding of the sum and truth of one or a few consequences remote from the first definitions and settled significations of names, but to begin at these and proceed from one consequence to another.[23]

Thus, like Locke, Hobbes compares reason to mathematics; both proceed in a logical development, from one step to the next step until an indisputable conclusion is reached:

> When a man <u>reasons</u>, he does nothing else but conceive a sum total from <u>addition</u> of parcels, or conceive a remainder from <u>subtraction</u> of one sum from another. . . .[24]

Reason becomes, then, "nothing but reckoning. . . ,"[25] which proceeds logically from sense-experience to a conclusion. This concept of reason, which Locke and Hobbes both seem to agree on, is not so very different from Newton's scientific method which, from observation of physical data, proceeds to draw general conclusions. For Newton, Locke, and Hobbes, the process of reason grounded in sense-experience can lead man to awareness of moral truth, which is embodied in the natural law governing the universe.

Newton, Locke, and Hobbes, although they acknowledge the importance of man's lawful reason in leading him to the laws of Nature, emphasize the externality of natural law and the role of sense-experience. With Descartes, however, the emphasis seems to be the opposite; for Descartes, while he admits the existence of external natural law, is more concerned with the inner logic of man's reason, which he considers far superior to sense-experience. In fact, it is reason, according to Descartes, which defines the very existence of man's identity:

> . . . je pris garde que, pendant que je voulais ainsi penser que tout était faux, il fallait nécessairement que moi, qui le pensais, fusse quelque chose. Et remarquant que cette vérité: je pense donc je suis, était si ferme et si assurée, que toutes les plus extravagantes suppositions des Sceptiques n'étaient pas capables de l'ébranler, je jugeai que je pouvais la recevoir, sans scrupule, pour le premier principe de la philosophie, que je cherchais.[26]

The process of Newton, Locke, and Hobbes that began in the external laws of Nature, which were filtered through the senses and finally apprehended by reason, is reversed by Descartes; Descartes begins by doubting the existence of everything except his own rational identity. It is reason, the divine law working from within, rather than sensory perception of divine law in external Nature, which leads Descartes to knowledge of God's existence. The goal of reason is true knowledge, which Descartes associates with perfection, "car je voyais clairement que c'était une plus grande perfection de connaître que de douter. . . ."[27] Absolute knowledge, that is absolute perfection, the ultimate end of reason, is God:

> . . . il est évident qu'il n'y a pas moins de répugnance que la fausseté ou l'imperfection procède de Dieu, en tant que la vérité ou la perfection procède du néant.[28]

Although Descartes' approach differs from that of Newton, Locke, and Hobbes, they all value reason as man's link with the divine law.

The eighteenth-century viewpoint, as we have seen, holds that this divine law, as evidence of God's will, manifests itself both externally, in natural law, and internally, in man's reason. This viewpoint is different from that of the picaresque in several ways. First, Nature is no longer corrupt, as it was for the Reformers; Nature, for the eighteenth century, is divinely ordered. The order in Nature corresponds to the order of man's reason; thus man, through use of his reason and sense-experience, can come to understand God's moral laws. This concept is quite different from that of the Reformation theorists who believed that man could only know God if, through Grace, God revealed Himself to man; man could not, of his own abilities, reach out to God. However, as Willey says, according to the eighteenth century, "whether you looked without or within, Nature (without any supernatural revelation) offered you all that was needful for salvation" (p. 8). Locke himself asserts that "God shows Himself to us as present everywhere and, as it were, forces Himself upon the eyes of men as much in the fixed course of nature now as by the frequent evidence of miracles in time past. . . ."[29] As has already been stated, it is artificial to separate reason and natural law because they are really the same thing; God's will is everywhere, morality is both without and within. The presence of moral law in Nature and man's ability to understand this law through reason means that survival in the natural world does not conflict, as it did in the picaresque, with morality. In fact, it seems that, from the perspective of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment,

it is a moral necessity for man to learn to adapt to and live harmoniously in the physical world around him.

NOTES

[1] Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1965), p. 5. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[2] Joel Hurstfield, "Introduction: The Framework of Crisis," in The Reformation Crisis, ed. Joel Hurstfield (London: Edwin Arnold Ltd., 1965), p. 7.

[3] Edmund Halley, "To the Illustrious Man Isaac Newton and This His Work Done in the Field of Mathematics and Physics: A Signal Distinction of Our Time and Race," trans. Leon J. Richardson, in Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and His System of the World, trans. Andrew Motte, rev. Florian Cajori, ed. R.T. Crawford (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946), p. xiii.

[4] Halley, p. xv.

[5] Roger Cotes, Pref. to the Second Edition, Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and His System of the World, trans. Andrew Motte, rev. Florian Cajori, ed. R.T. Crawford (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946), p. xxxii.

[6] Cotes, p. xxxii.

[7] R.T. Crawford, ed., "Book III: The System of the World (in Mathematical Treatment)," in Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and His System of the World, trans. Andrew Motte, rev. Florian Cajori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946), p. 546.

[8] René Descartes, Discours de la méthode, ed. Etienne Gilson (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1925), p. 42.

[9] Descartes, p. 43.

[10] John Locke, "Is There a Rule of Morals, or Law of Nature Given to Us? Yes," in Essays on the Law of Nature, ed. and trans. W. von Leyden (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 109.

[11] Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan: Parts I and II, ed. Herbert W. Schneider (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958), p. 130.

[12] Hobbes, p. 109.

[13] Holley, p. xiv.

[14] Cotes, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

[15] "Book II," in Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles, p. 547.

[16] "Book III," in Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles, p. 546.

[17] John Locke, An essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. A.D. Woozley (New York: The New American Library, 1974), pp. 89-90.

[18] Locke, Essay, p. 315.

[19] Locke, Essay, p. 340.

[20] Locke, "Is There a Rule of Morals?" in Essays on the Law of Nature, p. 111.

[21] Locke, "Can Reason Attain to the Knowledge of Natural Law Through Sense Experience? Yes," in Essays on the Law of Nature, p. 147.

[22] Hobbes, p. 25.

[23] Hobbes, p. 46.

[24] Hobbes, p. 45.

[25] Hobbes, p. 46.

[26] Descartes, p. 32.

[27] Descartes, p. 33.

[28] Descartes, pp. 38-39.

[29] Locke, "Is There a Rule of Morals?" in Essays on the Law of Nature, p. 109.

CHAPTER III

MORALITY IN GIL BLAS AND MOLL FLANDERS

Gil Blas and Moll Flanders, two novels frequently defined as picaresque, are also eighteenth-century works and, as such, we may expect to discover in them the influence of Enlightenment thought. As we have seen, however, the picaresque concept of morality is opposed to that of the Enlightenment. The typical picaresque novel, such as Lazarillo or Guzmán, presents a conflict between the worldly concern for survival and a higher, spiritual morality. For philosophers of the Enlightenment, no such conflict existed; encouraged by scientific discoveries of laws in Nature, these philosophers perceived in the natural order a manifestation of God's will. Seen in this new light, man's survival in the physical world no longer conflicted with morality because Nature was no longer viewed as fallen and corrupt. Morality, the law of God, was now perceptible in the natural world and man could understand this order through sense-perception and the order within himself: reason. The Enlightenment concept that man could achieve moral righteousness through his own abilities is vastly different from the moral perspective found in the picaresque which was influenced by the Reformation; the Reformers believed that man could only attain true morality through the divine revelation of God's grace. Due to the weakness of his own nature and the corruption of the fallen natural world around him, man must rely completely on God's mercy and His saving grace. Because of the opposing moral

viewpoints of the Enlightenment and the picaresque, it may be questioned if any novel written from the perspective of the Enlightenment can also be truly picaresque.

Gil Blas and Moll Flanders, however, do have the essential picaresque qualities. Gil and Moll are both born into the lower social classes. Moll's mother was a criminal who was transported to America, leaving Moll in England:

> . . . 'tis enough to mention that as I was born in such an unhappy place, I had no parish to have recourse to for my nourishment in my infancy, nor can I give the least account how I was kept alive; other than that, as I have been told, some relation of my mother took me away, but at whose expense, or by whose direction I know nothing at all of it.[1]

Although Gil's parents are not as Moll's mother, criminals, they are certainly not wealthy:

> . . . ils furent obligés de se mettre en condition, ma mère devint femme de chambre, et mon père écuyer. Comme ils n'avaient pour tout bien que leurs gages, j'aurais couru risque d'être assez mal élevé, si je n'eusse pas eu dans la ville un oncle chanoine.[2]

This last statement, as we quickly learn in the next few sentences, is ironic; far from being a scholar, Gil's uncle's main asset is his wealth:

> C'était un ecclésiastique qui ne songeait qu'à bien vivre, c'est-à-dire qu'à faire bonne chère; et sa prébende, qui n'était pas mauvaise, lui en fournissait les moyens. (I, 1)

Thus, Gil, like Moll, is born into difficult circumstances. Their stories are told, in picaresque fashion, in the first person, from their own perspective. Because of their low social status, both Gil and Moll must struggle to survive. However, it is in the concept of survival and its relationship to morality that Gil Blas (more than Moll Flanders)

differs from traditional picaresque novels such as Guzmán and Lazarillo. Gil Blas strongly reflects the Enlightenment viewpoint on morality whereas Moll Flanders is in several ways closer to the picaresque of the sixteenth century.

It is the blending of this Enlightenment viewpoint with picaresque qualities which makes Gil Blas and Moll Flanders difficult to classify fully as picaresque novels. Frohock says that this classification is possible in the case of Gil Blas but, "even as one declares Gil Blas to be authentically picaresque one enlarges the term somewhat. . . ."[3] Frohock's objection to referring to Moll Flanders as picaresque could, in fact, equally be applied to Gil Blas; the picaro would not understand the book's philosophy, says Frohock, "never having had the chance to observe that the wicked do not prosper or that the reward of virtue is finding oneself in easy financial circumstances."[4] For the picaro, the wicked do prosper in this world because the world itself is wicked; virtue goes unrewarded because morality is not reconcilable with prosperity. In this picaresque world, as Miller says, "the chaos is radical; it extends to the very roots of life."[5] Miller comments that the reader of Gil Blas has "a definite sense of stability"[6] and concludes at the end of his study that "Gil Blas is not a picaresque novel. . . ."[7] Moll Flanders, however, as Sieber illustrates, is closer to the Spanish picaresque, partly because of "her association of poverty and criminality. . . ."[8] Moll Flanders, for Sieber, is much closer to the traditional picaresque than Lesage's novel in which Gil, instead of being corrupted by the world, "is ennobled through his experiences."[9] Laufer, too, points out this aspect of Gil Blas which makes the novel

different from the Spanish picaresque:

> Lazarillo, Guzmán, le Buscón, Marcos de Obregón (en qui le page est devenu écuyer, homme d'âge et de réflexion), Estebanillo González se sont confondus en un seul personnage, ni bâtard, ni chrétien, ni déclassé, ni sage, ni bouffon, qui, né petit-bourgeois de province, apprend à connaître le monde, s'élève par ses talents de rédacteur aux premiers emplois dans les ministères et finit ses jours châtelain de village, anobli, opulent, vénérable.[10]

Longhurst, while disagreeing with Laufer's claim that Gil Blas is not picaresque admits that the novel has some modifications, among them that "things always turn out well. . ."[11] for Gil. This material prosperity, however, is accompanied by morality: "he is morally superior in that he makes a decision to reform, and carries through that reform successfully."[12] Jean Cassou also points out this spirit of optimism in Gil Blas which makes it so different from the picaresque "romans de la faim."[13] Cassou argues that

> . . . sans doute Gil Blas connaît-il, lui aussi, la nécessité, cède-t-il à celle-ci, se fait-il coquin par nécessité. Mais il se tire d'affaire, et de compromis en compromis, finit par dominer le destin, tout au moins par s'en accommoder.[14]

Cassou sums up this difference between Lesage's novel and the picaresque: "C'est que Lesage croit que l'homme peut se cultiver. Les picaresques ne le croient pas."[15] For the picaros, the world is meaningless, but "Gil Blas doit apprendre quelque chose de la vie. . . ."[16] Gil is able to learn from the world around him because that world runs essentially on moral laws in contrast to the world of the picaro which is "un mensonge définitif."[17] It is precisely the optimism of Gil Blas that Parker objects to in classifying the novel as picaresque: "The attempt to base Lesage's morality of success . . . on the Spanish picaresque tradition cannot be allowed to stand."[18] Optimism, says Parker, "not

only colours the final prosperity and happiness of Gil Blas, it is of course what, from the very start, had coloured the whole presentation of a society in which delinquency ostensibly plays a large part."[19] Parker likewise contrasts the pessimism of early Spanish picaresque novels with Moll Flanders, which embodies "the simple, ultimately optimistic, response. . ." of the eighteenth century. Parker states that "Defoe would seem to uphold a 'natural' morality based on 'natural' standards imposed by the law of reason."[21] As we have seen, it is this natural law of reason which promotes optimism because man can achieve morality in this world by using his own abilities and this morality does not necessarily conflict with material success.

Many of the critics quoted seem to view the final reconciliation of morality with worldly survival as a non-picaresque quality in Gil Blas and Moll Flanders, although Moll is closer to the original picaresque than Gil, which is more definitely in the Enlightenment trend of thought, as Parker explains:

> . . . optimism about life in general is more marked in France, where first the translators and then Lesage conjured away the serious moral and religious interest in delinquency that the Spanish genre had contained.[22]

The moral interest embodied by the Spanish picaresque is thus quite different from that of the Enlightenment; as we have seen, this difference centres on the relationship of survival and morality.

It is important to attempt to define what is meant by "survival." Atwood suggests that survival is a struggle against forces which "threaten to overwhelm the individual."[23] This is useful, because it opens up a distinction between survival and pride; if survival fights

against powers that may engulf the individual, pride is one of those powers which threatens to engulf other individuals. This distinction is important because pride, as the root of the seven deadly sins, is in direct contrast to morality. The opposite of pride is humility and it is possible to ally survival and humility; the individual struggling to survive must have an appreciation of his own insignificance, an appreciation which will give him humility. Seen from this perspective the difference between the picaresque and Enlightenment concepts of survival is clear. The picaresque views physical survival as opposed to the morality of spiritual survival because the physical world is itself immoral, governed by sin, and any individual involved in this world will be tainted. The Enlightenment, because it views the world as inherently moral, does not see physical survival as necessarily opposed to spiritual survival unless the individual loses sense of his place in the order of Nature and, in pride, tries to rise above the rest of the world.

It is important, both in the picaresque concept and that of the Enlightenment, that the individual does not lose this sense of humility, which is the perception of the truth of one's condition: in the picaresque, this "truth" is that man, because he lives in the corrupt world of nature, and because he is partly a natural creature himself, tends towards this corruption and evil; in the Enlightenment, however, the "truth" of man's condition is that he lives in the divine order of Nature, which he must not disrupt by stepping out of his place and attempting to rise above that order. Many times in Gil Blas this truthful perception of self takes the form of irony. Mueke describes the

necessity of true perception and awareness in order to realize irony:

> An ironist seems to be saying one thing but is really saying something quite different; a victim of irony is confident that things are what they seem and unaware that they are really quite different.[24]

It is the opposition of the elements of "'meaning' and 'being'. . ."[25] which creates the humour in irony. The imperceptive individual who is deceived by the illusion of "being," will see neither the true "meaning," nor, therefore, the humour. When the ironic perspective is turned on oneself it is necessary that the individual see through the appearance to the true reality of his being; this he can do only with humility because, if he is proud, he will be deceived by the appearance of his self-importance.

It is on the necessity of self-perception, in part, that both novels centre. Awareness of one's place in Nature, from an Enlightenment perspective, makes one moral through humility; this awareness comes from struggling to survive, because survival involves establishing one's identity in the world. Both novels progress through four stages of morality, the first being this survival struggle. Both Gil and Moll attempt to establish themselves and must fight to avoid being overwhelmed by the rest of the world. In the second stage, instead of finding their proper place within Nature, Gil and Moll succumb to pride and try to set themselves above the rest of humanity. They are both, in the third stage, punished for their pride and both repent when faced with death; death returns them to an awareness of their own insignificance. After repentance both Gil and Moll finally find their place in the harmony of Nature.

However, although the two novels are similar with respect to these four stages, there are several differences. These differences may be derived from Defoe's Puritan philosophy and make Moll Flanders closer to the early picaresque tradition. Stamm states that Defoe's "creative impulses were directed towards aims conditioned by this author's Puritan frame of mind."[26] Stamm links Defoe's Puritan tendencies more explicitly to the Calvinist doctrine of the Presbyterian Church:

> Calvinist theology corresponded to an utterly pessimistic attitude towards all that belongs to this world. It appealed to persons and groups of persons who were struck by a sense of sin when they observed themselves, and of incompleteness when they looked at the world around them. This lower reality seemed evil to them and without value if not touched by the grace of God.[27]

The Calvinist doctrine of worldly evil and human weakness is in direct line with Reformation viewpoints and the picaresque conflict of worldliness and morality. However, Stamm goes on to point out that "Defoe's own experience of reality had nothing in common with that of a believing Calvinist. He lacked the sense of sin, of a need for salvation, of the insignificance of things earthly, of the weakness of human reason unaided by the grace of God. . . ."[28] Stamm attributes this difference between Defoe and the traditional Reformation viewpoint to Defoe's "modernist" education: his reading of philosophers such as Locke and Hobbes. Thus, Defoe may be seen, in part, as rebelling against the Reformist dogmas by refusing to view the world as evil and mankind as weak; Novak points out, concerning Defoe, that "Throughout his writings on politics, economics, and practical morality there is an appeal to the laws of nature, sometimes called the laws of reason."[29] It is the divergence between this Enlightenment perspective on morality

and that of the Puritans, which is also embodied by the picaresque, that, as Stamm says, "forced the task on Defoe of finding more or less satisfactory compromises between the demands of his rebellious rationalism and those of the orthodox dogmas which he did not intend to sacrifice."[30] The divergence of these two conflicting viewpoints in Defoe, suggests Stamm, "gives us the key to an understanding of his renowned duplicity."[31]

This duplicity causes several differences between Gil Blas and Moll Flanders; alongside Defoe's Enlightenment perspective is that of the Puritan. In the first stage of moral progression in Gil Blas, the survival struggle is not immediately associated with pride. However, in Moll Flanders there is evidence that pride is inherent in survival from the beginning. After punishment, Moll repents through experiencing a divine revelation, which is not present in Gil Blas; Gil repents through "natural" means, returning to a moral relationship with the world around him. Even in the final stage of morality, Moll Flanders differs from Gil Blas. Gil works in the world to achieve his harmonious and prosperous situation at the end of the novel; Moll, however, has prosperity given to her by chance, almost as a reward for her repentance.

In the first moral stage, both Moll and Gil are involved in a struggle to survive. In Gil's case, survival is associated with not being a dupe, that is, not being tricked by others. This association is significant because Gil is usually duped by flattery; his pride is his downfall. He survives and escapes being saved by humility, realizing his proper situation. The chevalier who tricks Gil into a free meal at the beginning of the novel warns him:

> Soyez désormais en garde contre les louanges. Défiez-vous des gens que vous ne connaîtrez point. Vous en pourrez rencontrer d'autres qui voudront, comme moi, se divertir de votre crédulité; et peut-être pousser les choses encore plus loin; n'en soyez point la dupe, et ne vous croyez point sur leur parole la huitième merveille du monde. (I, 10)

It is made clear in this passage that Gil is deceived by flattery because he has such a high opinion of himself; he lacks self awareness. Gil is aware of his stupidity only after the incident:

> Ils vont composer de tout ceci une belle histoire qui pourra bien aller jusqu'à Oviedo, et qui t'y fera beaucoup d'honneur. Tes parents se repentiront sans doute d'avoir tant harangué un sot: loin de m'exhorter à ne tromper personne, ils devaient me recommander de ne pas me laisser duper. (I, 10)

This final statement is ironic because Gil will, in fact, at the court, become a trickster on a large scale. For the moment, however, he simply resolves not to be the dupe himself; he only tricks those who try to use him. Gil, it should be noted, learns by experience. Although he sets out for the University at Salamanca, it is the education of experience that shapes his personality. As he views his past life, Gil can speak of himself as a student with detached irony:

> J'aimais tant la dispute, que j'arrêtais les passants, connus ou inconnus, pour leur proposer des arguments. Je m'adressais quelquefois à des figures hibernoises que ne demandaient pas mieux, et il fallait alors nous voir disputer! Quels gestes! quelles grimaces! quelles contorsions! Nos yeux étaient pleins de fureur, et nos bouches écumantes; on nous devait plutôt prendre pour des possédés que pour des philosophes. (I, 2)

Circumstances force Gil to abandon his trip to Salamanca soon after he leaves home, however, as he is abducted by robbers. This kind of abduction is a common incident in picaresque novels; the picaro's first contact with thieves usually marks the beginning of his corruption.

This is not the case in Gil Blas, however, and there is a marked difference between Gil and the captain of the robbers, Rolando.

Rolando is raised in a wealthy home but he disregards the bourgeois life-style of his parents:

> Si dans mon enfance j'avais vécu au logis fort librement, ce fut bien autre chose quand je commençai à devenir maître de mes actions. Ce fut dans ma famille que je fis l'essai de mon impertinence. Je me moquais à tout moment de mon père et de ma mère. Ils ne faisaient que rire de mes saillies; et plus elles étaient vives, plus ils les trouvaient agréables. Cependant, je faisais toutes sortes de débauches avec des jeunes gens de mon humeur; et comme nos parents ne nous donnaient point assez d'argent pour continuer une vie si délicieuse, chacun dérobait chez lui ce qu'il pouvait prendre; et, cela ne suffisant point encore, nous commençâmes à voler la nuit. . . . (I, 20-21)

There is in Rolando's description a certain arrogance; it is in pride that he mocks his parents and it is because of pride that he sets himself apart from the normal flow of bourgeois society. Because pride is the father of the seven deadly sins, it is frequently accompanied by the rest; Rolando engages in "toutes sortes de débauches," likely resulting from lust and avarice, as he finds he must have more and more money. When Rolando attempts to convince Gil of the validity of his profession, he emphasizes the pleasure of freedom from responsibility; this freedom in itself may be seen as a mark of Rolando's pride, which liberates him from the relationships and responsibilities of social man:

> Tu vas, mon enfant, mener ici une vie bien agréable, car je ne te crois pas assez sot pour te faire une peine d'être avec des voleurs. Eh! voit-on d'autres gens dans le monde? Non, mon ami, tous les hommes aiment à s'approprier le bien d'autrui; c'est un sentiment général, la manière seule de le faire en est différente. (I, 25)

Rolando's position has so warped his viewpoint that, arrogantly, he sees the world entirely from his own perspective; unable to see the

harmony, he perceives only chaos in the world about him. Ironically, Gil will himself become part of this "robbers' world" at the court. For the time being, however, Gil rejects Roland's view; he only pretends to become a robber to deceive the others and escape (indeed, he makes a very poor robber as he is himself tricked by a monk whose relics he attempts to steal). In fact, Gil is proof that Rolando's view of the world is distorted.

Gil is still, unlike Rolando, part of humanity and is still capable of feeling compassion for others; after hearing Doña Mencia's sad history, Gil remarks, "je la laissai donner un libre cours à ses soupirs; je pleurai même aussi, tant il est naturel de s'intéresser pour les malheureux. . ." (I, 5). Not only does Gil still feel responsibility for others, but he has a true perception of himself. When he is tricked once more by flattery and his money is stolen by Raphaël, Ambroise, and Camille, Gil realizes that he should "n'imputer qu'à moi ce triste incident" (I, 73). Even when Gil becomes a servant and adopts the advice of Fabrice, he does so to survive; trickery is necessary for the servant in order to prevent him suffering at the hands of his master:

> Le métier de laquais est pénible, je l'avoue, pour un imbécile; mais il n'a que des charmes pour un garçon d'esprit. Un génie supérieur qui se met en condition ne fait pas son service matériellement comme un nigaud. Il entre dans une maison pour commander plutôt que pour servir. Il commence par étudier son maître: il se prête à ses défauts, gagne sa confiance, et le mène ensuite par le nez. (I, 78)

Although there is perhaps a foreshadowing of the complete arrogance that will overtake Gil at the court ("commander plutôt que pour servir"), for the most part the servant's trickery is defensive; he

dissembles in order to please his master and survive as a servant.

When Gil enters the service of Doctor Sangrado he demonstrates again his perception: from the start he is not deceived by Sangrado and recognizes the superficiality of his professional capacity:

> Il s'était mis en réputation dans le public par un verbiage spécieux, soutenu d'un air imposant, et par quelques cures heureuses qui lui avaient fait plus d'honneur qu'il ne méritait. (I, 97)

Sangrado says to Gil that "profitant du fruit de ma longue expérience, tu deviens tout d'un coup aussi habile que moi" (I, 100). This statement is ironic since we know already from Gil's uncle that he is an "habile garçon. . ." (I, 3). Gil plays the role of a doctor, as does Sangrado, for the purpose of making money and impressing people, but he does so with open eyes, fully aware of what he is doing: "je l'assurai que je suivrais toute ma vie ses opinions, quand même elles seraient contraires à celles d'Hippocrate" (I, 100). Imitation is the best form of flattery and Gil deceives Sangrado by emulating him. However, Gil does not deceive himself; when Fabrice sees through his reputable doctor's costume, Gil laughs with him because he is able to view himself ironically, piercing the outward appearance to view the truth of his nature:

> Il [Fabrice] me regarda longtemps avec surprise; puis il se mit à rire de toute sa force, en se tenant les côtés. Ce n'était pas sans raison: j'avais un manteau qui traînait à terre, avec un pourpoint et un haut-de-chausses quatre fois plus long et plus large qu'il ne fallait. Je pouvais passer pour une figure originale et grotesque. Je le laissai s'épanouir la rate, non sans être tenté de suivre son exemple; mais je me contraignis; pour garder le <u>decorum</u> dans la rue, et mieux contrefaire le médecin, qui n'est pas un animal risible. (I, 100-101)

Thus, the trickery of false appearance is useful to the picaro in his struggle to survive as long as, like Gil, he can still realize the truth behind the appearance. Dona Mergelina perceives this truth when she remarks: "Il en coûte trop pour acquérir le fond des vertus: on se contente aujourd'hui d'en avoir les apparences" (I, 143).

Gil later plays the role of a nobleman in order to seduce a lady. As with Sangrado, Gil is once more imitating his master who is now Don Mathias:

> Je changeai d'humeur et d'esprit. De sage et posé que j'étais auparavant, je devins vif, étourdi, turlupin. Le valet de don Antonio me fit compliment sur ma métamorphose. . . . (I, 189)

Once more, however, Gil perceives the ironic truth of the situation when he discovers that his "lady," Laure, is only a maid playing the role of a lady to catch a gentleman. Gil sees that Laure is deceptive in another way too; her virtuous manner conceals a more "experienced" personality:

> Laure, pour en donner au lecteur une idée juste et précise, était aussi jeune, aussi jolie et aussi coquette que sa maîtresse, qui n'avait point d'autre avantage sur elle que celui de divertir publiquement le public. (I, 231)

Gil perceives that Laure and her mistress, Arsénie, are only symptomatic of the theatre, which becomes an important symbol of role playing:

> Je cessai donc de regarder les comédiens comme d'excellents juges, et je devins un juste appréciateur de leur mérite. Ils justifiaient parfaitement tous les ridicules qu'on leur donnait dans le monde. Je voyais des actrices et des acteurs que les applaudissements avaient gâtés, et qui, se considérant comme des objets d'admiration, s'imaginaient faire grâce au public lorsqu'ils jouaient. (I, 230)

Gil gives himself up temporarily to "la débauche" of the theatre but leaves when, once again, he perceives the truth of his situation:

> . . . par un effet de mon heureux naturel, les désordres de la vie comique commencèrent à me faire horreur. Ah! misérable, me dis-je à moi-même, est-ce ainsi que tu remplis l'attente de ta famille? N'est-ce pas assez de l'avoir trompée en prenant un autre parti que celui de précepteur? Ta condition servile te doit-elle empêcher de vivre en honnête homme? (I, 231-232)

Later in the novel when Gil helps Raphaël and Ambroise steal merchant Simon's money he retreats once more from a life-style of trickery. Raphaël, like Rolando, may be contrasted with Gil. Raphaël and Ambroise too, are fully fledged picaros in the Spanish tradition. They trick people not merely to survive but to profit and they seem to be social outcasts by choice; when Gil meets them once again later on they convince him they have reformed but this is quickly proven false when they steal some money and escape. Raphaël and Ambroise conform to Raphaël's mother's view of the world where "chacun s'imagine être au-dessus de son voisin" (I, 379). Gil rejects this view when he decides to return Simon's money; he vows that "Je ne succombai point à la tentation; je puis même dire que je la surmontai en garçon d'honneur. . ." (II, 1). The reader can, in fact, agree with Gil for, throughout the first stage of the novel he has maintained his status of "garçon d'honneur." Although he has succumbed several times to flattery and debauchery and demonstrated his capacity as a trickster, he has always been primarily concerned with personal survival and he has always returned to a basically honest perception of himself and the world around him. The Duc de Lerme commenting on Gil's story sums up the worldly temptations which confront every picaro, that Gil has managed to overcome:

> . . . à ce que je vois, vous avez été tant soit peu picaro. Monseigneur, lui répondis-je en rougissant, Votre Excellence m'a ordonné d'avoir de la sincérité, je lui ai obéi. Je t'en sais bon gré, répliqua-t-il. Va, mon enfant, tu en es quitte à bon marché, je m'étonne que le mauvais exemple ne t'ait pas entièrement perdu. Combien y a-t-il d'honnêtes gens qui deviendraient de grands fripons, si la fortune les mettait aux mêmes épreuves! (II, 107-108)

This statement is ironic not only because, as we shall see, Gil soon becomes one of the "grand fripons," but because he does so partly due to the influence of the corrupt minister he works under, the Duc de Lerme himself.

Thus Gil manages to acquit himself reasonably well in the first stage of the novel. He extricates himself from the mistakes he makes because of his self-perception as well as his perception of others; awareness that he is really no better than anyone else gives Gil an understanding, though sometimes ironic, perspective on himself and his fellow man. Moll's position in Moll Flanders, however, is much more ambiguous. Whereas Gil's trickery and deception are for the most part excusable as necessary for personal survival, Moll's actions, although presented as being understandable, are also usually accompanied by moral criticism; in Moll's case, as opposed to that of Gil, pride seems to be inherent in her struggle to survive.

Moll describes the necessity for survival near the beginning of the novel:

> . . . a poor desolate girl without friends, without cloaths, without help or helper, as was my fate; and by which I was not only expos'd to very great distresses, even before I was capable, either of understanding my case, or how to amend it, but brought into a course of life, scandalous in itself, and which in its ordinary course tended to the swift destruction both of soul and body. (p. 10)

Beginning here we can see Defoe's ambivalent attitude towards the need for survival. From an eighteenth-century standpoint he seems to appreciate the right of every individual to survive; already we are aware that Moll is "expos'd to very great distresses" and that she has no choice but to take certain actions in order to survive. This logical necessity is reinforced by the phrase, "course of life"; the events in life are inescapable and, given certain circumstances, we must expect certain results. The inescapability of committing immoral acts in order to survive does not, however, mean that the acts are any less immoral; they still lead to the destruction of the soul. Parker emphasizes the sympathetic response of Defoe to the individual in need. The earlier picaresque, says Parker, represents "a complex attempt to strike a just, and necessarily painful, balance between divine law and human reality. For Defoe there is no problem, and no pain in according sympathy. . . ."[32] Whereas Defoe sympathizes with Moll's situation but perceives the immorality of the acts she is driven to commit, Lesage, says Parker, does not deal with this immorality inherent in necessity: "everything is done and described in a gentlemanly and restrained manner: we are amused, not shocked, much less disturbed."[33] Novak, like Parker, discusses Defoe's sympathetic attitude towards the individual driven by necessity. For Novak, this sympathy arises in large part from Defoe's eighteenth-century viewpoint on man's natural right to survive in the physical world:

> When Moll Flanders, Colonel Jack, and Roxana attempt to excuse their crimes, they plead their "Necessity." Such a plea is meaningless when judged by the "common received notion" of morality or by the English common law, but has a significant place in contemporary discussions of natural law.[34]

The sympathy for the person in need coupled with an awareness of the immorality that necessity leads to forms the base for the ambiguity in Moll Flanders.

Like Gil, Moll soon becomes aware that she must avoid being duped. It is for this reason that "to think of going into service at all was such a frightful thing to me. . ." (p. 12). Service is "frightful" to Moll because it would leave her open to another's manipulation. However, in what becomes one of the dominant themes of the novel, Moll discovers that there are other, more deceitful means of manipulation; the man-woman relationship is a kind of trickery for Moll. Like Gil, Moll is duped by flattery but here the tone is more serious as the older Moll who is narrating her story looks back on the younger Moll who is already a victim of her pride and, unlike Gil, is not capable of true perception:

> It will not be strange if I now began to think; but alas! it was but with very little solid reflections: I had a most unbounded stock of vanity and pride, and but a very little stock of virtue. (p. 24)

Moll thus surrenders to the sexual advances of the elder brother in the family she is living with because of pride:

> I gave myself to ruin without the least concern, and am a fair memento to all young women whose vanity prevails over their virtue. (p. 24)

Along with pride comes lust and avarice:

> I was more confounded with the money than I was before with the love; and began to be so elevated, that I scarce knew the ground I stood on: I am the more particular in this, that if it comes to be read by any innocent young body, they may learn from it to guard themselves against the mischiefs which attend an early knowledge of their own beauty; if a young woman once thinks herself handsome, she never doubts the truth of any man that tells her he is in love with her; for if she believes herself charming enough to captivate him, 'tis natural to expect the effects of it. (p. 23)

Moll's first liaison with the elder brother occurs because she is deceived by flattery and this deception is itself possible because of Moll's pride. The statement that "I scarce knew the ground I stood on" points to Moll's lack of personal awareness; she is "elevated" above her true identity and in this way her pride deceives her and removes her ability for self-perception. Defoe demonstrates once more through his narrator, however, that he can sympathize with the consequences of beauty: "'tis natural to expect the effects of it," even when those effects are pride, lust, and avarice.

Although Moll may lack true perception of self, she does not fail to perceive others well. She becomes aware in her affair with the elder brother that she is being manipulated and she comes to view human relations, specifically those of men and women, as being mutually deceitful:

> I had been tricked once by that cheat call'd love, but the game was over, I was resolv'd now to be married or nothing, and to be well married or not at all. (p. 53)

Marriage, for Moll, is a business contract; she states later on in the novel that marriages are "the consequences of politick schemes for forming interests, carrying on business, and . . . love had no share, or but very little in the matter" (p. 60). The assumption that marriage is a purely business relationship, with each partner trying to get as much out of the other as possible, leads Moll to view herself as a kind of commodity:

> . . . being still young and handsome, as everybody said of me, and I assure you I thought myself so, and with a tolerable fortune in my pocket, I put no small value on myself. (p. 53)

This passage again reveals Moll's warped and superficial view of herself which is a result of her pride and, again, pride is associated with avarice. When Moll does find a likely prospect for marriage, she describes the deceitful nature of their relationship: "I hook'd him so fast, and play'd him so long, that I was satisfied he would have had me in my worst circumstances. . ." (p. 72). Again we can see in this quotation the contrast between Moll the narrator, and Moll the younger character; although the older Moll perceives her character as well as the situation clearly, she is talking over the head of her earlier self. This younger Moll may see through the deceits of marriage arrangements but she does not view herself clearly; indeed, she seems unaware of herself except as a piece of goods that she must sell. As is usual with Defoe, however, we can sympathize with Moll's position; it seems natural that Moll, after being so used by the older brother, should come to view relationships with such a jaundiced eye and eventually become a superior trickster herself. The same process takes place, as we shall see, in Gil Blas, but the process is slower because Gil succumbs to pride more slowly. We are aware of Moll's pride from the beginning; it is her pride that allows her to be used (through flattery) and our awareness of this tends to undercut our sympathy.

Moll's actions are thus by no means all governed by her pride, for, just as our sympathy is undercut by our awareness of her pride, so our condemnation of her character is counterbalanced by our awareness of and our sympathy for the circumstances which cause her black outlook on human relationships. This tension between understanding and disapproval can be perceived throughout the novel in several ways. In

this first stage of morality we are aware, for example, that Moll's view of marriage as a business contract and her manipulation of her partners is necessary for survival. Moll cannot afford the luxury of falling in love and becoming too involved. She learns early in her relationship with the older brother, that a woman with little money is vulnerable to anyone who wants to make use of her. The only way to personally survive is to retaliate using the same deceptive techniques as the manipulator. The only problem is that Moll allows her pride in her abilities to ensnare men to destroy her perception of her true situation, something that does not happen in Gil Blas until later in the novel. Gil and Moll are alike in one respect, however, and that is their practicality; both are concerned with the pragmatic realities of survival. This explains in part Moll's constant tallying of possessions although it also serves to reinforce her businesslike concept of marriage. Similarly, we can sympathize with Moll's inability to provide for her children, but we are nevertheless a little shocked at her dismissal of them. Moll seems to view children as by-products of her relationships but, again, she is not cruel, only preoccupied with the practicalities of existence:

> . . . it was death to me to part with the child, and yet when I consider'd the danger of being one time or another left with him to keep without being able to support him, I then resolv'd to leave him; but then I concluded to be near him myself too, that I might have the satisfaction of seeing him, without the care of providing for him. (p. 109)

Moll demonstrates a similar preoccupation with personal needs when she leaves her brother in America. Once she realizes that she has married her own brother she decides to leave America even though "I

might perhaps have marry'd again there, very much to my advantage, had it been my business to have staid in the country. . . ." (p. 91). Again, although Moll is concerned for her brother, she does not allow this concern to dominate her life and distract her from her own needs. Moll even agrees to part from Jemy, the only man whom she really loves, because of practical necessity:

> We parted at last, tho' with the utmost reluctance on my side, and indeed he took his leave very unwillingly too, but necessity obliged him, for his reasons were very good why he would not come to London, as I understood more fully afterwards. (p. 138)

In the first stage of Gil Blas, Gil was able to maintain a consistently true perception of himself and so avoid pride; his deceitful trickery was defensive, only to ensure his survival. In the first stage of Moll Flanders, however, while we are also aware of the practicality of her attitudes and actions, which are necessary for her personal survival, we are at the same time aware of her pride. Practicality and selfishness are two opposing sides of necessity; the first is understandable as necessary for survival but the other is the right to survive pushed far beyond its limit. The proud person is oblivious to anything but his (or her) own needs and exhibits little concern for those who get in the way of those needs. Paradoxically, however, the proud person is essentially unaware of himself because pride is an illusion, disguising the reality of his true nature.

In the second stage of Gil Blas, Gil gives himself over completely to pride. No longer engaged in a struggle for his own survival, Gil tries to elevate himself above the rest of humanity:

> Je changeai tout à coup avec la fortune. Je n'écoutai plus que mon ambition et ma vanité. (II, 126)

When he was struggling to survive, Gil was forced into humility by a realization of his own insignificance; now that he no longer has to worry about survival his pride takes over and isolates him from other people:

> . . . avant que je fusse à la cour, j'étais compatissant et charitable de mon naturel; mais on n'a plus là de faiblesse humaine, et j'y devins plus dur qu'un caillou. Je me guéris aussi par conséquent de ma sensibilité pour mes amis; je me dépouillai de toute affection pour eux. (II, 146)

As he is now so isolated from others, Gil is no longer used and duped. However, now Gil uses others to satisfy his pride. He procures a new estate for Alphonse simply to impress him and refuses to help a friend of Navarro, who had helped him get started at the court:

> Au lieu de sentir quelques remords d'en avoir usé de la sorte avec un ami véritable, et à qui j'avais tant d'obligation, j'en fus charmé. Outre que les services qu'il m'avait rendus me pesaient, il me semblait que, dans la passe où j'étais alors à la cour, il ne me convenait plus de fréquenter des maîtres d'hôtel. (II, 147)

Gil feels equally arrogant and proud with the bourgeois family he is going to marry into but manages to ingratiate himself by dissembling and playing a role. Fabrice admires this ability, saying that Gil is "propre à tout" (Gil, II, 143). However, it is this "habileté" of being a consummate role player which causes Gil to lose all sense of his true identity. At the court he forgets who he really is:

> En un mot, j'étais devenu si fier et si vain, que je n'étais plus le fils de mon père et de ma mère. (II, 162)

The court "a la vertu du fleuve Léthé pour nous faire oublier nos parents et nos amis. . ." (II, 162). Gil thus loses himself at the court as a result of his pride; possessed by his pride, Gil no longer has a true perception of himself:

> L'avarice et l'ambition qui me possédaient changèrent entièrement mon humeur. Je perdis toute ma gaieté; je devins distrait et rêveur, en un mot, un sot animal. Fabrice me voyant tout occupé du soin de sacrifier à la fortune, et fort détaché de lui, ne venait plus chez moi que rarement. Il ne put même s'empêcher de me dire un jour: En vérité, Gil Blas, je ne te reconnais plus. (II, 164)

Fabrice contrasts the earlier Gil with the Gil of the court:

> . . . tu t'enveloppes, et me caches le fond de ton âme. Je remarque même de la contrainte dans les honnêtetés que tu me fais. Enfin, Gil Blas n'est plus ce même Gil Blas que j'ai connu. (II, 164)

Gil is in effect now possessed by himself, that is, by his pride, almost as if he were possessed by a demon.

As Gil loses awareness of himself we can notice a change in the narrative voice. As in the first stage of Moll Flanders, the older Gil who is narrating, speaks above the head of the Gil who is the character in the action. Because Gil the character no longer perceives himself clearly he is thus distanced from Gil the narrator who in retrospect is able to see through the illusion of pride which possessed his former self. It is significant when Gil says, "Je perdis toute ma gaieté," because his humorously ironic view of himself was characteristic in the first stage of the novel; but irony requires an accurate vision, which is something Gil no longer has of himself. He takes himself too seriously, a process which began at Galiano's, possibly in rebellion against the manipulation of those who tried to take advantage of him: "je ne pouvais plus, comme autrefois, envisager l'indigence en philosophe cynique" (II, 98). Thus, in the second stage of moral development, Gil gives up merely struggling to survive and surrenders to pride which elevates him above the rest of humanity and the order of Nature.

For Moll, too, the struggle for mere survival ends in the second stage of the book in which she becomes a thief. However, because pride and avarice have always been associated to some extent with Moll's actions, the change does not seem as startling as it does with Gil. In fact, when Moll first turns to robbery, we sympathize, as we did in the first stage of the novel, because Moll becomes a thief out of necessity:

> O, let none read this part without seriously reflecting on the circumstances of a desolate state, and how they would grapple with want of friends and want of bread; it will certainly make them think not of sparing what they have only, but of looking up to Heaven for support, and of the wise man's prayer, Give me not poverty lest I steal. (pp. 165-166)

As in the case of Gil Blas, however, we soon discover that Moll can no longer use poverty as an excuse for wrongdoing. Although necessity first prompted Moll to steal she becomes "harden'd by success. . ." (p. 180), until she no longer even wishes to stop being a thief:

> At length yielding to the importunities of my crime, I cast off all remorse, and all the reflections on that head turn'd to no more than this, that I might perhaps come to have one booty more that might compleat all; but tho' I certainly had that one booty, yet every hit looked towards another, and was so encouraging to me to go on with the trade that I had no gust to the laying it down. (p. 180)

Moll the narrator can, in retrospect, admit frankly that it was no longer necessary for her to steal in order to survive:

> . . . at last I got some quilting work and the like; and this I lik'd very well and work'd very hard, and with this I began to live; but the diligent devil who resolv'd I should continue in his service continually prompted me to go out and take a walk, that is to say, to see if any thing would offer in the old way. (pp. 172-173)

We have seen how Gil became "possessed" by his pride and avarice at the court; a similar possession occurs with Moll. However, whereas Gil is possessed from within by pride, Moll is possessed by an external agent of evil. Brown describes "a strong fear of the menace of other wills. . ."[35] which pervades Defoe's novels. It is the "diligent devil," an external evil, which takes over Moll's self, compelling her to be a thief when necessity no longer forces her to steal:

> . . . the Devil who laid the snare prompted me, as if he had spoke, for I remember, and shall never forget it, 'twas like a voice spoken over my shoulder. Take the bundle; be quick; do it this moment. (p. 166)

The Devil encourages Moll and, although she feels a "horror" (p. 166) in her soul, she cannot prevent herself from stealing. In fact, she seems to be, like Gil, losing awareness of herself: "I knew not what I said or did all night and all the next day" (p. 167). With Moll, as well as Gil, possession obscures their true identity:

> . . . my prayers had no hope in them; I knew not what to do, it was all fear without and dark within. . . . (p. 168)

The "dark within" may be the evil nature of the Devil who has occupied her soul; it may also represent the utter blankness of Moll's lost identity. Like Gil, Moll adopts different roles, a deceptive technique which helps her in theivery: "I took up new figures and contriv'd to appear in new shapes every time I went abroad" (p. 229). The Devil, however, can only take possession of an individual's soul if he is given access by the individual himself. We have seen that, even in the first stage of the novel, Moll was proud and that her pride obscured a true perception of self; only in humility can one perceive oneself accurately, because pride blinds an individual to his faults. Thus it

is possible that, even when she is possessed and her true identity is taken over, the illusion of pride remains:

> I grew more harden'd and audacious than ever, and the success I had, made my name as famous as any thief of my sort ever had been. (p. 229)

Moll and Gil in the third section of the novels are both punished and both repent of their past actions; however, this repentance is achieved in different ways. Gil is arrested and sent to prison by the king for having corrupted his son, the prince, by arranging a liaison with Cataline, who turns out to be a lower class girl scheming to become a member of the aristocracy. In effect, however, Gil's imprisonment may be seen as punishment for his corruption at the court. In order to maintain his favoured position as confidant to the Duc de Lerme, Gil was involved in unethical procedures to please the corrupt Duc, who wanted to pass his position on to his nephew. For pandering to the Prince's desires, Gil and the Duc's nephew are both punished; the Duc himself, however, refuses to help Gil. The dungeon in which Gil is imprisoned becomes a symbol of hell:

> . . . la clarté du jour, perçant au travers d'une petite fenêtre grillée, vint offrir à ma vue toute l'horreur du lieu où je me trouvais. (II, 17)

In Moll Flanders, however, the prison as a symbol of hell is much more explicit:

> I looked upon myself as lost, and that I had nothing to think of but of going out of the world and that with the utmost infamy; the hellish noise, the roaring, swearing and clamour, the stench and nastiness, and all the dreadful afflicting things that I saw there, joyn'd to make the place seem an emblem of hell itself, and a kind of entrance into it. (pp. 238-289)

The accumulation of nouns and adjectives in this passage leading up to the description of the prison as hell seems to reflect the chaos of hell itself. Just as in Moll Flanders Moll was not merely possessed by her own inner pride, as Gil was, but also by an external, more explicit evil force, so Moll's punishment is portrayed as being "other-worldly," truly an "emblem of hell itself," a disordered Pandemonium. Gil's punishment, however, while hellish, is not hell itself, but a physical dungeon. Nor was Gil possessed by an external agent of evil, as was Moll; he succumbed to his own pride. Gil's corruption was facilitated by his employment under a corrupt minister; in this way it is the ambition of the Duc for power, which raises him above others, that encourages the pride and ambition of Gil. The Duc, however, is not evil incarnate but a human being corrupted by his own pride. Moll, in contrast to Gil, is corrupted by the devil himself, an explicitly pure form of evil, although, like Gil, it is pride that leads Moll to give in to the temptation.

It is while they are in prison that Gil and Moll repent and, in both cases, their repentance involves a new humility through which they realize their proper position with respect to others. This realization is represented in Gil by his humanitarianism. He tries to console a fellow prisoner, an act reminiscent of his compassion for Dona Mencia in the first stage of the novel when his struggle for survival forced him to a humble recognition of his place in the world. While in prison Gil also experiences a new bond with his servant, Scipion:

> Du premier moment que tu vins t'offrir à mon service, tu me plus. Il faut que nous soyons nés l'un et l'autre sous la Balance ou sous les Gémeaux, qui sont, à ce qu'on dit, les deux constellations qui unissent les hommes. (II, 205)

While in prison, too, Gil becomes sick and, having approached death so closely, he is once more aware of the true nature of his humanity:

> Je me rétablis peu à peu, par le plus grand bonheur du monde: une parfaite tranquillité d'esprit devint le fruit de ma maladie. Je n'eus point alors besoin d'être consolé. Je gardai pour les richesses et pour les honneurs tout le mépris que l'opinion d'une mort prochaine m'en avait fait concevoir; et, rendu à moi-même, je bénis mon malheur.
> (II, 209-210)

Gil is now restored to his true self because he is no longer proud. The necessity of survival forced Gil into a humility and a humanitarianism which he no longer experiences once he has progressed beyond that necessity. He must be plunged into adversity once more in prison to jolt him back to a realization of his true nature. We can see, then, that the balance of humility and prosperity at the end of the novel, which is neither a struggle to survive nor overbearing pride, is very difficult to attain.

Moll, in contrast to Gil, has never been truly humble; even while concerned with the necessity of survival Moll was tainted with selfishness. Whereas Moll's downfall resulted from an external spiritual form of evil as well as her own pride, Gil's corruption was primarily a result of his pride, although this was encouraged by his contact with the Duc de Lerme. Just as Gil's corruption comes from within himself, or at least within this world, so does his repentance, represented in a new humility and humanity towards his fellow man. For Moll, however, in addition to humility and human love, her repentance involves her in a new relationship with God; this divine revelation counterbalances her contact with the devil earlier. Thus, for Moll, Newgate is not only the entrance to hell, but, paradoxically, it is also the "new-gate" to

a better life. One aspect of Moll's repentance, as well as Gil's, is reflected in her love for another human being: Jemy. For the first time, Moll truly forgets about herself:

> I was overwhelm'd with grief for him; my own case gave me no disturbance compar'd to this, and I loaded my self with reproaches on his account . . . and the first reflections I made upon the horrid life I had liv'd began to return upon me, and as these things return'd, my abhorrence of the place, and of the way of living in it, return'd also; in a word, I was perfectly chang'd, and became another body. (p. 245)

Moll is transformed by human love and is restored to herself just as Gil is; she perceives finally the wrongness of her acts. This awareness of self which has hitherto only been exhibited by Moll the narrator, in retrospective analysis, is finally experienced by the younger character of Moll who observes, "In short I began to think, and to think indeed is one real advance from hell to heaven; all that harden'd state and temper of soul which I said so much of before is but a deprivation of thought; he that is restor'd to his thinking is restor'd to himself" (p. 245). It is a conscious, rational awareness of herself that changes Moll and effects her repentance but, as Brown points out, "this transformation is a return to self. . . ."[36]

Moll faces death, as does Gil, when she is to be sent to the gallows but, unlike Gil, who is transformed by his new relationship with his fellow-men alone, Moll also experiences a divine vision:

> . . . the word <u>eternity</u> represented itself with all its incomprehensible additions, and I had such extended notions of it that I know not how to express them. (p. 250)

The inexpressibility of this vision is significant because Moll is typically able to sum up situations, tallying up profits and losses in

detail like a bookkeeper. The fact that she cannot describe her vision places it outside worldly experience and in the realm of revelation. Moll confesses her sin to the priest, another demonstration of her new honest appreciation of self, and through the priest Moll comes to a new relationship with and understanding of God:

> . . . [the minister] explain'd to me what he meant by repentance, and then drew out such a scheme of infinite mercy, proclaim'd from heaven to sinners of the greatest magnitude, that he left me nothing to say. . . . (p. 251)

We have seen how, in the first stage of the novel, the necessity of survival seems to go hand in hand with pride in Moll's character because, from the Puritan viewpoint, both survival and pride are worldly and anything in this world is evil. It is fitting, therefore, that when Moll repents she renounces this world completely; not only is she no longer concerned with pride, but she is also no longer even worried about physical survival:

> I thought I cou'd freely have gone out that minute to execution without any uneasiness at all, casting my soul entirely into the arms of infinite mercy as a penitent. (p. 252)

Moll, like Gil, however, is eventually released from prison and, also like Gil, she attains in the final stage of the novel a life of harmony; but the manner in which she achieves this balance of morality and prosperity is different from that of Gil Blas.

Gil, after his humility and identity are restored to him, resolves to "aller vivre en philosophe" (II, 210). He reads "les bons ouvrages de morale. . ." (II, 211). Gil moves to an estate that Alphonse has given him and marries. This life of tranquility does not last for long, however; after the death of his wife and child, Gil returns to the court.

It is possible that Lesage, from an eighteenth-century viewpoint, is illustrating the necessity of man learning to adapt himself to the harmony of the world around him; Gil cannot detach himself from humanity in order to find harmony. It is easy to live a moral life apart from the rest of the world, but when Gil returns to the court, he learns that it is possible to maintain this morality in a worldly setting. Thus, the return to the court counterbalances the previous stay there; whereas he was influenced by the corrupt Duc de Lerme before, this time Gil works for an ethical minister, the count of Olivarès, who, when he is falsely accused of treason, resigns to spend the rest of his life in a monastery. When Gil returns to the court he is no longer possessed by avarice and pride; he has learned, in true eighteenth-century fashion, by experience. In a brief conversation between Fabrice and Gil, Fabrice shows himself to be more of a picaro in the traditional pattern, believing that prosperity and morality cannot be reconciled. For Gil, however, who has learned to live in harmony with the world, this reconciliation is possible:

> Cela n'est pas possible, dit Nunez; ton maintien est sage et modeste; tu n'as pas l'air vain et insolent que donne ordinairement la prospérité. Les disgrâces, repris-je, ont purifié ma vertu; et j'ai appris à l'école de l'adversité à jouir des richesses sans m'en laisser posséder. (II, 353)

Thus, Gil can now survive and prosper without being possessed by ambition and pride. When he sees how the new king mistreats Lucrèce, Laure's daughter whom the king asked Gil to bring to the court, Gil asks for another commission. Even when he is given a title of nobility, Gil does not feel superior at all:

> . . . elles [the letters of nobility] ne m'inspirèrent aucun orgueil. Ayant toujours devant les yeux la bassesse de mon origine, cet honneur m'humiliait au lieu de me donner de la vanité. . . . (II, 408)

Gil's awareness of his true identity is restored, but the ironic vision of self is almost non-existent in the last stage of the novel. For irony to exist there must be a discrepancy between the way something appears to be and the way it really is; thus the ironic vision sees through the illusion of appearance to the inner reality. In the first stage of the novel it was observed that Gil could view himself ironically even though he was playing roles. When he succumbed to pride, however, he lost sense completely of his true self. Now, in the final stage of the novel, Gil's pride has disappeared and he no longer plays roles, and so there is absolutely no discrepancy between his "appearance" and his "reality." His real identity is complete and so he no longer has to view himself ironically to perceive the truth.

Like Gil, Moll too achieves a final harmony in the last stage of the novel: a reconciliation of morality and prosperity. She marries Jemy, whom she loves, and is restored to her son she had by her brother. All three live harmoniously and prosperously in America. Moll comes into her fortune honestly but in a manner different from Gil's. Moll does not work in the world for her fortune, as Gil must; instead she inherits her money by chance. In a sense, then, Moll seems to remain more aloof from society than does Gil; in fact, she leaves her home for America where she and Jemy live together on an estate. Like Gil, however, Moll is not corrupted by money as she had been when she was a thief. This morality is evidenced in part by Moll's awareness of herself which continues from the third stage of the novel. Reason

has always been an important factor in Moll's identity; we saw how, in the beginning of the novel, she reacted rationally and practically to the necessity of survival, even though this practicality was accompanied by selfishness. When she was possessed by the devil Moll seemed to be irrational because she was unaware of herself.

The final reconciliation of morality and prosperity in Gil Blas and Moll Flanders represents an essentially eighteenth-century viewpoint. In Moll Flanders, however, this reconciliation seems ambiguous because in the first part of the novel even Moll's struggle for survival was accompanied by selfish pride; this selfishness and ambition were extended in the second stage of the novel where Moll was entirely taken over by worldly concerns, and necessity was no longer a plausible excuse. It was only in the third stage that Moll, through a divine vision, renounced the world completely. After this progression, the final worldly prosperity at the end of the novel seems contradictory, unless we view it as a reward for her repentance; in effect, worldly riches come to Moll, paradoxically, after she has renounced this world. Thus, in Defoe's novel, we can see the eighteenth-century perspective combined with the Puritan, which is in direct line with the Reformation division of morality from worldliness, a division we also find in the picaresque. This split of spiritual morality from the physical world does not exist in Gil Blas, however. In this novel we find a true eighteenth-century viewpoint where morality is inherent in physical Nature. Divine revelation is not necessary for Gil to work out his redemption; he achieves a balance of morality and prosperity in worldly experience. In his early struggle for survival Gil maintains a

consistently honest perception of himself and his relationship with others. It is his inner pride and ambition, rather than an external devil, which leads Gil to immoral conduct. As punishment, Gil is cast down from his elevated pride and forced to realize once more his proper place in the natural order. It is a moral lesson learned by worldly experience that, even in his final prosperity, Gil does not forget.

NOTES

[1] Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders, ed. James Sutherland (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), p. 10. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[2] Alain-René Lesage, Gil Blas de Santillane, Vol. I (Paris: Librairie Garnier Frères, n.d.), p. 1. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[3] W.M. Frohock, "The Idea of the Picaresque," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, 16 (1967), p. 49.

[4] Frohock, p. 51.

[5] Stuart Miller, The Picaresque Novel (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1967), p. 134.

[6] Miller, p. 17.

[7] Miller, p. 132.

[8] Harry Sieber, The Picaresque (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1977), p. 55.

[9] Sieber, p. 50.

[10] Roger Laufer, Lesage, ou le métier de romancier (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1971), p. 14.

[11] Jennifer Longhurst, "Lesage and the Spanish Tradition: Gil Blas as a Picaresque Novel," in Studies in Eighteenth Century French Literature Presented to Robert Niklaus, ed. J.H. Fox, M.H. Waddicor and D.A. Watts (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1975), p. 136.

[12] Longhurst, p. 136.

[13] Jean Cassou, "Lesage," in Tableau de la littérature française (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1939), II, 197.

[14] Cassou, p. 197.

[15] Cassou, pp. 197-198.

[16] Cassou, p. 196.

[17] Cassou, p. 197.

[18] Alexander A. Parker, Literature and the Delinquent: The Picaresque Novel in Spain and Europe: 1599-1753 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), p. 125.

[19] Parker, p. 123.

[20] Parker, p. 107.

[21] Parker, p. 106.

[22] Parker, p. 110.

[23] Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Limited, 1972), p. 17.

[24] D.C. Muecke, Irony (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1970), p. 30.

[25] Muecke, p. 5.

[26] Rudolf G. Stamm, "Daniel Defoe: An Artist in the Puritan Tradition," Philological Quarterly, 15 (July 1936), 225.

[27] Stamm, pp. 225-226.

[28] Stamm, p. 227.

[29] Maximillian E. Novak. Defoe and the Nature of Man (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 1.

[30] Stamm, p. 229.

[31] Stamm, p. 229.

[32] Parker, p. 107.

[33] Parker, p. 121.

[34] Novak, p. 65.

[35] Homer O. Brown, "The Displaced Self in the Novels of Daniel Defoe," Journal of English Literary History, 38 (December 1971), 564.

[36] Brown, p. 578.

CONCLUSION

MORALITY AND IDENTITY

In the analysis of the two novels we have seen incorporated both the picaresque and Enlightenment perspectives. That of the Enlightenment, which views morality as inherent in the natural world, is revealed in the progression of Gil Blas while Moll Flanders is more inclined towards the picaresque division of morality from worldly interests. The discussion of these novels, however, also raised the important question of identity, which is perhaps inevitably bound up with morality since morality involves the actions and attitudes of the individual himself.

In both these novels the relationship of morality and identity focuses on pride and humility. Pride, because it is an illusion, blinds the individual to honest self-perception; conversely, humility is true awareness of one's own nature. There is, however, a difference in the way pride and humility are perceived from the Enlightenment and picaresque viewpoints.

The picaresque, which seems to include the perspective of the Reformation, because of the division of world and spiritual morality, views the world as inherently evil and immoral. Pride, from this viewpoint, is essentially a rebellion of man's will against God; because God is infinitely superior to man, man's pride will not prevail

if he acknowledges the existence of God. In order to make his pride seem realistic he turns to worldly concerns which he makes more important than God's presence and spiritual morality. Because he is unaware of his own weakness and inferiority in comparison to God, the proud individual does not have a true perception of self. In order to be humble, man must realize the truth of his weakness and submit to God which cannot be achieved unless he first renounces all worldly claims.

In many respects Moll Flanders typifies this picaresque view. Moll is proud and this pride blinds her to not only herself, but also the presence of God. She is possessed by the devil who is allied to worldly ambition, encouraging Moll's ever-increasing avarice. God, however, seems to be definitely separated from this world and Moll's "conversion" occurs when she renounces the world; she becomes aware of the infinite power of God's mercy, and this awareness leads her to a humble, honest admission of her own weakness and sin. Her prosperity at the end of the novel, indeed, seems to represent an "out of place" eighteenth-century reconciliation of morality and worldliness, a reconciliation that is denied by the previous progress of the novel. This prosperity may, however, be seen as a reward for Moll's conversion; she does not have to wait for the after-life for happiness. It must be remembered, too, that Moll gives up the idyllic life to return to England, resolving with her husband to spend the remainder of their lives in sincere penitence for their sins. This final penitence illustrates the truthfulness of Moll's moral conversion.

The almost complete separation of worldliness from morality which we find in Moll Flanders until the final stage in the novel is not

present in Gil Blas, which embodies fully an eighteenth-century perspective. Because, in the Enlightenment, morality was viewed as being inherent to the physical world of Nature, considerations of pride and humility were different from those of the picaresque. Since God's order is revealed in the natural world, pride is a rebellion against the natural order and occurs when an individual tries to set himself above the rest of humanity. If pride thus blinds a person to his proper situation in the world, then humility is the realization of one's true place in the natural order. This conception of pride and humility is typified in Gil Blas. Gil's pride isolates him from his fellow-man and it is when he experiences human love and fellowship that he is restored to a humble awareness of his proper place. Prosperity is only a temptation to pride in that it sets a man materially above those around him; but, in contrast to Moll Flanders, in Gil Blas worldly involvement, adaptation and survival are, in fact, necessary to morality because, for the Enlightenment, morality and identity are defined by man's relationship to the world around him. This concept is very different from that of the picaresque in the Reformation, which considers morality and identity as ultimately definable only in man's relationship to God.

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